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BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELORS

HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Conference Call Summary
Wednesday, April 23, 2008
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Welcome
Dr. Gary Sayler, University of Tennessee, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Gary Sayler, Chair of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) Homeland Security Subcommittee, welcomed the Subcommittee members to the conference call.

Administrative Procedures
Mr. Greg Susanke, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Office of Research and Development (ORD), Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Mr. Greg Susanke, Subcommittee DFO, took roll and reviewed the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) procedures that are required for all BOSC Subcommittee meetings. A contractor is present to take notes to capture the discussions of the conference call and prepare a summary, which will be available on the BOSC Web Site after being certified by the Chair. The notice for this teleconference was published in the *Federal Register* on March 17, 2008. A docket for this Subcommittee has been established at http://www.regulations.gov (Docket ID EPA-HQ-ORD-2008-0054). Materials for this conference call are available on the BOSC Web Site.

Mr. Susanke stated that it is his responsibility as the DFO to ensure that the Subcommittee's conference calls and meetings comply with all FACA rules. All meetings and conference calls involving substantive issues, whether in person, by phone, or by e-mail, that include one-half or more of the Subcommittee members must be open to the public, and a notice must be placed in the *Federal Register* at least 15 days prior to the call or meeting. The Subcommittee Chair and DFO must be present at all conference calls and meetings.

Regarding financial conflict of interest, Mr. Susanke worked with officials to ensure that requirements were met satisfactorily. He asked the Subcommittee members to notify him immediately if any potential conflicts of interest arise. He received six requests from the public for the materials for this teleconference but there were no specific requests for public comment. Nevertheless, the agenda allows time for public comment at 4:45 p.m. He asked that all public comments be limited to 3 minutes each.

Ms. Lori Kowalski, DFO for the BOSC Executive Committee and alternate DFO for this Subcommittee, explained the history of the BOSC program review process. The BOSC began conducting prospective and retrospective reviews of ORD's research programs in 2004 at ORD's request, focusing on topics that cut across its laboratories and centers. To date, the BOSC has completed nine reviews, and the final BOSC reports are available on the BOSC Web Site. Because ORD would like its programs to be reviewed on a regular cycle, the BOSC has applied a consistent approach to each review whenever possible. For example, the Subcommittee Chair Handbook contains a set of template charge questions; the charge questions for this Subcommittee are based on those template questions. Additionally, the review process has evolved via feedback from BOSC members.

Subcommittee members should inform the Chair if they require information or materials other than those included on the draft list of needed materials. EPA will do its best to supply the requested materials to the Subcommittee.

Overall program performance now is rated via a qualitative scale, and questions regarding efficiency have been added. The BOSC conducts these reviews across ORD's programs, and this review process may be different from those experienced by the National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC) in the past.

Overview—Office of Research and Development

Dr. Kevin Teichman, EPA/ORD, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science

Dr. Kevin Teichman, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science, ORD, explained that ORD, with nearly 2,000 employees, 13 research facilities, and an approximately $540 million dollar budget, is tasked with providing credible, relevant, and timely research results and technical support to inform EPA policy decisions with the strongest possible science. ORD's mission is to advance the scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems that the Agency faces by: (1) performing health and ecological effects research that is responsive to the environmental decisions that EPA must make; (2) supporting EPA program offices and regions and other organizations through scientific and technical advice and assistance; and (3) providing scientific leadership in identifying, studying, and resolving critical environmental health and ecological effects issues and in shaping the environmental health and ecological effects research agenda. ORD provides the scientific foundation to support EPA's mission to "protect human health and safeguard the natural environment—air, water, land—upon which life depends." Additionally, ORD supports the program and regional offices and interfaces with states and tribes.

The EPA Assistant Administrator for ORD is an appointed position, whereas the directors of ORD's offices, centers, and laboratories are career federal employees. ORD laboratories follow the risk assessment/risk management paradigm, with each laboratory focusing on specific steps within the paradigm. The National Center for Computational Toxicology and NHSRC are new centers that perform research in all areas of the risk assessment/risk management paradigm. Eight National Program Directors (NPDs) lead the planning and development of eight research programs. Although no NPD has been established for the Homeland Security Research Program, Dr. Gregory Sayles has been acting in this capacity. Two ORD offices focus on budget, communication with programs and regions, and cross-Agency issues, respectively.

ORD develops its research programs via the ORD Executive Council, which makes corporate and budget decisions informed by two key groups, the NPDs and the Laboratory and Center Directors. The NPDs provide strategic input regarding the research areas that will be investigated, and the Laboratory and Center Directors provide leadership and implement the research programs. Communication between the NPDs and the Laboratory and Center Directors is critical in the planning and implementation of EPA's research programs. Additional input is received from programs, regions, the EPA Strategic Plan, congressional mandates and presidential priorities, BOSC reviews, other external advisory committees, stakeholders, and the public. Feedback is received from the evaluation process, which includes BOSC reviews, reviews by other external committees, and Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) reviews conducted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Finally, the NPDs communicate research results. Laboratory, center, and research program outputs allow the program and regional offices to work with the states to develop policies that provide short- and long-term environmental outcomes.

To achieve these outcomes, Multi-Year Plans (MYPs) are used as planning tools to address EPA's high-priority science questions, provide information to assist and support resource decisions, demonstrate how programs contribute to Agency strategic goals, provide information to be used in OMB PART reviews, and communicate research inside and outside of ORD. MYPs include: Long-Term Goals (LTGs) that

identify the timeframe to deliver research and determine ORD's role, Annual Performance Goals (APGs) that identify the sequence in which to provide results and integrate research from all sources, and Annual Performance Measures (APMs) that determine who will accomplish the work and ensure that available resources are adequate to perform the work. Much of the Subcommittee's review will focus on LTGs and APGs.

BOSC reviews focus on the planning and performance evaluation areas of the research process. BOSC evaluations help answer two key questions: (1) Are we doing the right science? and (2) Are we doing the science right? The reviews also provide guidance for developing the research/assessment program and contribute evidence for OMB PART reviews. PART reviews evaluate program effectiveness in four key areas: purpose and design, strategic planning, program management, and program results. Program results are important, composing 50 percent of the PART score. The key criteria used to evaluate programs are quality, relevance, and performance; the Subcommittee members must consider several factors within each of these criteria.

In summary, ORD seeks input from many sources to enhance and develop its research program, and BOSC program evaluations are among the most important inputs. The Subcommittee's review of the NHSRC will be of great value and is much appreciated.

Dr. Joseph Bozzelli asked about the Global Change Research Program's role in ORD. Dr. Teichman responded that this is a cross-cutting program managed by an NPD. Although several laboratories and centers throughout ORD contribute to this effort, the National Center for Environmental Assessment is the primary center responsible for the synthesis and assessment products. This is one of EPA's most important contributions to U.S. research on global change.

Dr. Bozzelli requested a description of subtopics covered within the Homeland Security Research Program. Dr. Teichman explained that Mr. Jonathan Herrmann would describe the presidential directives that are the driving forces of the Program. Some of the subtopics include: (1) security in and around buildings, (2) water security, including vulnerability assessments to assist cities with the placement of sensors in water systems, and (3) risk assessments to guide first responders. The risk assessments performed by the NHSRC fills a specific niche, because no other EPA laboratory is performing the same type of dose-response risk assessments.

A Subcommittee member asked if the BOSC review rating is numerical. Dr. Teichman replied that, although OMB's ratings are numerical, the BOSC's are not. BOSC ratings are qualitative with sufficient narrative included to explain the rationale behind the overall rating.

Dr. James Romano, Jr., asked how involved the NPDs are in the research conducted by the laboratories and centers as well as the subsequent evaluation of the work. Dr. Teichman answered that the NPDs determine the work that should be performed by the laboratories and centers, but personnel and implementation decisions are the responsibilities of the Laboratory and Center Directors. The NPDs and Laboratory and Center Directors communicate the results to customers once research products are available. This communication is important, because the research products must be used by program and regional offices, states, and tribes to achieve outcomes.

Review of Subcommittee Charge

Dr. Gary Sayler, University of Tennessee, Subcommittee Chair, and Mr. Phillip Juengst, EPA/ORD

Dr. Sayler provided an overview of the "Program Review Charge—Homeland Security Research Subcommittee" document that the members had received. He explained that the BOSC review is an overarching analysis of the Program, and detailed evaluation of individual groups of experiments is not expected. The Subcommittee members should focus on determining whether the MYP and LTGs are

understandable and appropriately structured. Subcommittee members should approach the review from a broad perspective, considering details but focusing primarily on an evaluation of the overall picture. The Subcommittee will focus on questions in the categories of program relevance, program structure, program quality, scientific leadership, coordination and communication, and program performance and efficiency. The Summary Assessment covered in 4.0(2) in the document is not a numerical rating; instead, the Subcommittee will assign a Program rating in one of the following categories: Exceptional, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, or Not Satisfactory. The charge questions used for the Summary Assessment are:

1. How appropriate is the science used to achieve each LTG (i.e., is the Program still asking the right questions, or has it been eclipsed by advancements in the field)?

2. How good is the scientific quality of the Program's research products?

3. How much are the Program results being used by environmental decision-makers to inform decisions and achieve results?

The Subcommittee will produce a narrative discussion that includes the rationale for the rating. BOSC reviews complement OMB reviews but are meant to provide the Agency with structure, guidance, and an overall analysis to help prepare and direct the Program.

Mr. Phillip Juengst provided background on the qualitative ratings. He explained that the two primary drivers for the development of performance measures are: (1) the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires all agencies to develop annual and long-term measures of performance, particularly outcomes that are linked to a strategic plan; and (2) the Office of Science and Technology Policy and OMB R&D Investment Criteria for Federal Agencies. The latter document is a component of the PART review, has been endorsed by the National Academies, and focuses primarily on quality, relevance, and performance. EPA has developed a balanced suite of measures—including outputs, outcomes, and efficiency—to track the quality, relevance, and performance of ORD research. Of particular importance is how ORD research has impacted Agency decisions meant to improve human health and the environment. This is a long-range measure affected by the time required, first, to develop research and, second, for the program and regional offices to implement this research in decision-making with human health and environmental outcomes.

The BOSC ratings serve as transparent indicators of ORD's success in achieving these long-term program goals. The rating categories were developed through a BOSC/ORD/OMB workgroup and added to all BOSC reviews beginning in 2007. Each BOSC subcommittee is asked to provide a rating for each long-term goal—using the defined categories and qualitative terms—of how the program is performing in terms of the quality of the research, its relevance to decision-makers, and its long-term impact. The narrative that is included with this rating is critically important because it allows ORD to improve its programs. Note that the ratings should not be based on the program's success in meeting all of its APMs. The Subcommittee should decide ratings on the basis of the program's success in meeting its broader research goals under each LTG—i.e., APGs—in terms of timeliness, quality, and use in decision-making.

Mr. Juengst also explained that the last charge question relating to efficiency is new, and the BOSC Executive Committee will discuss the role of the BOSC in assessing program efficiency during its May 2008 meeting. The National Academies released a January 2008 report, *Evaluating Research Efficiency in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, which indicated that the best approach for assessing research efficiency is to rely on an independent expert review process to assess how effectively the program invested and managed its portfolio. The assessment of efficiency cannot be separated from the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the research. To begin implementing this recommendation from the National Academies, ORD developed a new charge question which asks the Subcommittee to explicitly

assess the extent to which the Program's resources, at a broad level, have been allocated to the most appropriate priorities.

Ms. Ellen Raber asked whether Summary Assessment Question 3, which also occurs as a charge question under the category of "Program Performance and Efficiency," should be evaluated twice in the two different contexts. Mr. Juengst explained that each Summary Assessment questions are embedded within the broader charge questions in the various categories. The Summary Assessment questions are those charge questions that are most related to the R&D Investment Criteria—quality, relevance, and performance—and thus should be the primary focus of the summary rating. Leadership and other factors also may play a role in the summary rating.

Ms. Raber asked if the Subcommittee members would receive information about how the research has been used by EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) for regulation. Mr. Herrmann responded that he will touch on this information in his presentation, and OSWER personnel will be at the face-to-face meeting to answer further questions.

Overview—National Homeland Security Research Center

Jonathan Herrmann, EPA/ORD, Director, NHSRC

Mr. Herrmann explained that NHSRC employs approximately 60 technical and administrative personnel, about one-half of whom hold doctoral degrees. The staff has broad expertise in the areas of toxicology, microbiology, chemistry, health physics, public health, and so forth. The unique aspect of the Center is that its research comprises all parts of the risk assessment/risk management paradigm. The two important aspects of NHSRC's mission are its expertise and its products, including peer-reviewed reports and software tools. The expertise and products are used by EPA to help prevent, prepare for, and recover from public health and environmental emergencies arising from terrorist threats and incidents. NHSRC's vision is to advance the nation's security through science.

NHSRC activities are guided by the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 and Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs). The main HSPDs guiding research activities are HSPD 7 (drinking water and water treatment systems), HSPD 9 (food, water, and agriculture), HSPD 10 (biological agents and decontamination), and HSPD 22, which is not publicly available at this point. NHSRC also supports OSWER specifically, and EPA in general, in areas related to the National Response Framework, which addresses disasters and emergencies. Under the Framework, EPA provides support for Emergency Support Functions 3 (water) and 7 (decontamination) using the authority it has exercised for nearly 30 years under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (commonly known as CERCLA or Superfund), which has been expanded to include large-scale natural and intentional disasters.

The White House's *The National Strategy for Homeland Security* and EPA's *Homeland Security Strategy* establish policy for the research, which generally is overseen by the Deputy Administrator. Mr. Marcus Peacock, the current Deputy Administrator, has delegated this responsibility to Mr. Thomas Dunne, Associate Administrator for Homeland Security. The importance of homeland security research to EPA's mission is further acknowledged in EPA's Strategic Plan, which discusses homeland security issues and support in this area for program offices.

NHSRC began as a temporary, 3-year center to address critical research needs and provide information for EPA to use in the event of a terrorist attack. It became apparent that gathering information through such a "one-shot" effort would not be sufficient, and the NHSRC was established as a permanent organization in December 2004. NHSRC has published research results in more than 125 reports and journal articles since 2003 and partners with the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Energy, Department of the Interior, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other EPA research

laboratories. Mr. Herrmann presented two graphs that displayed annual full-time equivalents (FTEs) and annual budgets from fiscal years (FYs) 2002 through 2009; the FY 2009 budget calls for approximately 57 FTEs and $40 million.

NHSRC's primary customers are OSWER and the Office of Water; the Center also conducts research for and receives support from the Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxic Substances, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, and the Office of Air and Radiation. The Office of Homeland Security, which reports to Mr. Dunne, is the overall coordinator of these efforts. Mr. Dunne wanted a simple, concise work plan for each office, with four focus areas: water security, decontamination, emergency response, and internal preparedness. NHSRC comprises: the Immediate Office of the Center Director, which handles budget and science policy issues; three divisions (Decontamination and Consequence Management, Water Infrastructure Protection, and Threat and Consequence Assessment); and the Response Capability Enhancement Team. NHSRC also frequently works with the National Risk Management Research Laboratory and the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. The Center also has a physical security component, which is unique within ORD, because of the sensitivity of some research.

NHSRC develops its research priorities by aligning the various aspects of threat scenario development, scientific judgment (e.g., peer review), and government requirements, including HSPDs. As a result of customer needs and the urgency of the research, products must be generated rapidly, with approximately 2–3 years from initiation to delivery. Another challenge of the Center is to become a more integrated part of ORD. The objectives of the Center are to: protect, detect, contain, decontaminate, dispose, and communicate. To achieve these objectives, the Center currently has roughly a $30 million budget to spend on salaries, equipment, travel, and extramural research; it also operates and finances facilities in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. NHSRC tries to maintain as much intellectual ownership over its products as possible. The Center has a number of projects underway to protect water systems by defining threats and vulnerabilities, provide rapid and reliable contaminant detection, contain contamination and mitigate impact, decontaminate and treat affected areas, dispose of contaminated materials, and assess risk and communicate. To ensure quality, NHSRC products and research plans undergo vigorous internal and external reviews, including scientific, security, and policy reviews. Additionally, NHSRC personnel present results nationally and internationally, and a Web site is devoted to communicating results to stakeholders.

Regarding a Subcommittee member's previous question about partnerships, Mr. Herrmann explained that when products are developed, NHSRC focuses on two groups: (1) customers, and (2) partners with expertise. FDA and NIOSH laboratories, including the FDA's forensic chemistry laboratory, are located in Cincinnati near EPA's laboratory. NHSRC and CDC recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly investigate microbial issues. NHSRC is prototyping a microbial sample concentrator with the Idaho National Laboratory and developing chemical methods in conjunction with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The Center has multiple partnerships with DoD, collaborating with: (1) the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center to examine different types of decontamination; (2) the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, Virginia, to examine biotoxins and develop methods; and (3) Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on another project. Additional collaborators include the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Public Comments

Mr. Susanke called for public comments at 4:45 p.m. No comments were offered.

Preparation for the Face-to-Face Meeting

Dr. Gary Sayler, University of Tennessee, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Anil Nerode suggested that responsibilities should be divided according to Subcommittee members' expertise; Dr. Sayler agreed and stated that this would be discussed. In preparation for the face-to-face meeting, workgroups must be determined and information needs must be addressed. He explained that members should have received a table of proposed materials for use by the Subcommittee. Some of the listed information and materials will be sent via e-mail, some are available on the Web site, and some are provided in the Subcommittee binders. He asked Mr. Susanke when the MYP and LTGs would be available to Subcommittee members. Mr. Susanke responded that the MYP and LTGs will be the main focus of the next teleconference; he will send the MYP to the Subcommittee members prior to the next teleconference.

Mr. Leo Labaj asked for confirmation about the materials that had been sent to Subcommittee members to ensure that he was not missing anything. Mr. Susanke replied that only the materials from the administrative teleconference and presentations and materials for this teleconference had been sent so far. Other materials will be sent at appropriate intervals so as not to overwhelm the Subcommittee members.

Dr. Sayler asked about the EPA Strategic Plan (2006), the EPA *Homeland Security Strategy* (2004), and *The National Strategy for Homeland Security* (2007). Mr. Susanke explained that these background documents are too large to be sent via e-mail and are available on the BOSC Homeland Security Web Site.

Dr. Sayler asked when the Subcommittee members could discuss assignments for the face-to-face meeting. Mr. Susanke responded that 35 minutes have been set aside for this discussion during the next teleconference.

Dr. Romano commented on the importance of the NPDs, which Dr. Teichman stressed in his presentation, and asked why this was not manifested in NHSRC's ontogeny. Mr. Herrmann answered that the NHSRC is structured so that activities reside within the NHSRC and not across ORD. Dr. Sayles acts as an NPD, and this will be explained further in upcoming calls and at the face-to-face meeting.

Dr. Sayler thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Action Item

- ✍ Mr. Susanke will send the Homeland Security Research Program MYP to the Subcommittee members prior to the next conference call.

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HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
AGENDA
April 23, 2008
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Participation by Teleconference Only
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3:00–3:05 p.m.	Welcome - Roll Call - Overview of Agenda	Dr. Gary Sayler, Subcommittee Chair
3:05–3:10 p.m.	Administrative Procedures	Greg Susanke, Subcommittee DFO
3:10–3:40 p.m.	Overview—Office of Research and Development	Dr. Kevin Teichman, Deputy Asst. Administrator for Science, ORD
3:40–4:00 p.m.	Review Subcommittee Charge	Dr. Gary Sayler, Subcommittee Chair
	- Program Assessment - Program Summary Accountability	Phillip Juengst, Accountability Team Leader, ORD
4:00–4:45 p.m.	Overview—National Homeland Security Research Center, ORD	Jonathan Herrmann, Director, NHSRC/ORD
4:45–4:50 p.m.	Public Comment	
4:50–5:00 p.m.	Preparation for Face-to-Face Meeting - Subcommittee Organization - Identification of Additional Information Needs	Dr. Gary Sayler, Subcommittee Chair
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn	